

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend claim 1 and add new claims 10-14, as set forth in the following claim listing.

1. (currently amended) A mechanical device for absorbing impact energy applied to a vehicle seat comprises a sliding bracket connecting one of the seat and a ~~consisting of a seat lower base (pedestal) and a bracket attached to the~~ a vehicle floor[.], ~~The~~the ~~attachment between the seat base and sliding bracket permits~~ permitting a damped sliding movement of ~~the~~ an integral belted seat and occupant relative to the vehicle floor, thereby dissipating energy during a vehicle frontal collision and lowering the g-force on both the belted occupant and ~~the~~ a rear seated occupant who would impact the rear of the front seat frame.

2. (original) A mechanical device as in feature 1 wherein the bracket is slotted and attached with a fastener such as a rivet or shoulder bolt to permit sliding travel.

3. (original) A mechanical device as in feature 1 where the bracket is an L-cross section or U-cross section metal member.

4. (original) A mechanical device as in feature 1 where the bracket is slotted with an interference fit to permit sliding movement at a prescribed force and continued resistance force.

5. (original) A mechanical device in feature 1 where the sliding movement would have a break away feature to initiate sliding travel only at a predetermined force level.

6. (original) A slide design in feature 1 where the slot is serrated to provide continued resistance force as a means to absorb energy during vehicle impact and seat travel.

7. (original) A slide design as in feature 1 where the slot has a molded plastic insert that is “extruded” by the attachment rivet during seat to floor relative movement, thereby acting as an energy absorber.

8. (original) A mechanical device consisting of a seat frame and pedestal where the energy absorber slot is located at the top of the pedestal instead of bottom of the pedestal to the floor.

9. (original) A mechanical device as in feature 1 wherein the bracket has a slot that varies in size along its length, as by being narrowed or tapered from rear to front, to control the resistance force of the rivets sliding forward, thereby absorbing energy in the prescribed manner to meet the school bus standard.

10. (new) In a vehicle wherein a seat is mounted in a normally fixed position with respect to a vehicle floor, an energy absorbing sliding bracket for attaching the seat to the floor, the bracket permitting the seat to travel forwardly with respect to the floor at a controlled resistance force in response to an impact load on the vehicle, so as to reduce the rate of seat deceleration and reduce forces on a vehicle occupant that impacts the rear of the seat as a result of the vehicle impact.

11. (new) A vehicle as in claim 10 wherein the bracket includes a slide member attached to the seat and a fixed member attached to the floor, the slide member being slidably mounted to the fixed member for movement through a predetermined travel distance between a rest position and an

actuated position, the bracket including travel damping means for providing resistance to travel, such that the force of a vehicle impact in the direction of travel of the slide member is dissipated over the distance of travel of the slide member, thereby reducing the deceleration force on a vehicle occupant impacting the rear of the seat as a result of a front impact of the vehicle.

12. (new) A vehicle as in claim 11 wherein the slide member comprises one or more transverse rods that fit in one or more slots in the fixed member, the fixed member resisting movement of the rod through the slot by one or more of the shape of the slot and deformable material in the fixed member that engages and resists movement of the rod through the slot.

13. (new) A vehicle as in claim 11 wherein one of the fixed and slide members comprises an upwardly facing U-shaped lower channel and the other of the fixed and slide members comprises a downwardly facing U-shaped upper channel that fits in an open top of the lower channel, the lower channel including a deformable material that resists sliding movement of the slide member in the fixed member.

14. (new) An impact dampening mounting mechanism for mounting a vehicle seat in a yielding position on a vehicle floor comprising:

a fixed bracket mounted in a relatively fixed position with respect to the vehicle floor;

a movable bracket slidably mounted in the fixed bracket, the movable bracket being mounted in a relatively fixed position with the seat; and

movement impeding means interposed between the fixed bracket and the movable bracket for yieldably restraining relative movement between the fixed and movable brackets, the

impeding means exerting a braking force on the movable bracket through a predetermined range of movement under impact so as to dissipate an impact load over the range of movement.